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COOPERATION FOR SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT

A radio talk by B. H. Crocheron, director of Extension, California State Extension Service, delivered in the Department period of the National Farm and Home Hour, November 2, 1935, and broadcast by NBC and a network of 60 associated radio stations.

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How do you do! I am glad to greet the 4-H clubs of America on their Achievement Day. You have made a splendid record. May your numbers and your power increase!

I have been asked to discuss with you the need for cooperation for successful achievement. This gives an opportunity to say a number of different things that I'd like to talk over with you.

I am on the top floor of a tall building in San Francisco and if the curtains were drawn back I could look straight out the Golden Gate over the waves of the Pacific Ocean. I have been across that ocean several times and I hope that some day each one of you will be able to go across it also -- but before you start buy a round-trip ticket, for I think you'll want to come back to America. In those countries across the Pacific a number of things would strike you. You might be impressed by the crowded cities -- crowded far beyond those in America -- by their filth, by their disease; but I think that you would be impressed also by the lack of cooperation among the people. They are seldom able to work together for the general good of the community. People are not able to merge their own interests into those of the whole people of which they are a part.

If you will read the story of the pioneers in America you will be struck by the fact that they worked together. The troubles of one family were those of the entire locality. They shared their troubles and therefore their successes. Pioneer America developed a great civilization because our forefathers realized they would fail if they worked for themselves alone. That was real cooperation. By it they made a real achievement.

A trip across the Pacific would also make you realize how prosperous America is. You would have the same realization if you made a trip to Europe. Nowhere in any other country is the general standard of living so high as in America. We have been passing through a period that we call the depression. Most of you 4-H club members are young enough that you've grown up in it. You regard the depression as a terrible calamity. However, even now our people live better than those anywhere else.

A striking thing, also, about America is the relatively general diffusion of wealth. We still have a few people who are too rich and many people who are too poor, but most of those that we call "poor" would in other countries be considered far above the poverty level. America is not perfect. There are many things you will wish to improve as you grow older, but we have made a better job of civilization than any other great nation on the globe.

These accomplishments were achieved for us by working together. People in this country have, generally, been impressed by the need for law and order,

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which is in itself a form of cooperation. They have been willing to join in a movement for the public welfare and to do their share toward it. They have been willing to contribute to the community chest, to join the chamber of commerce, the farm bureau or the grange, to serve on the school board, or work for the upbuilding of the church, even though they did not expect to get any direct personal benefit from it. By this cooperative spirit it has been possible to develop American institutions for public welfare and to create a great achievement in facilities for the public good. Among farming people "cooperation" as a word is usually discussed as a method of marketing farm products. Cooperation is broader than that. It extends into the whole question of the relationship of individuals to society. If we all spend our whole time striving for personal advantage, then society languishes and even government proceeds haltingly.

The 4-H clubs have flourished because a large number of public-spirited persons have been willing to give their time and attention, without financial compensation. These individuals -- 65,000 of them in America -- are known to you as local leaders. I cannot give them too much praise. Four-H club work succeeds because of their efforts. In addition to these local leaders, there are a vast number of others helpful to the enterprise -- service clubs, granges, farm bureaus, churches -- all these assist 4-H club work. In this activity many public-spirited Americans give their time, without money and without price, toward the attainment of an ideal. The result is that more than 900,000 boys and girls have an opportunity to benefit from 4-H club training.

To my mind, 4-H club work has an obligation placed upon it to emphasize public service rather than private gain. The goal of 4-H achievement should be sought in training for public service rather than training for personal profit. To me it seems as if more of the time of 4-H clubs should be given to a consideration of what they can do for the community and less time to the contest phases of 4-H club work. In this I would not minimize the home project, which is an essential part of 4-H club work and which has differentiated it from other types of clubs for boys and girls. However, I do wish that we might develop these projects so that they would have as their primary goal a benefit to the whole community rather than the desire of the individual to win. This is not a new idea; the original function of these home projects was that they should be demonstrations of good farming, but I am wondering whether we have not to some degree lost sight of these home projects as a public benefaction rather than a private gain.

Is it not possible to trend the 4-H clubs toward a larger element of public service as a group organized for that purpose? Cannot the boys and girls in 4-H clubs set an example of unselfish leadership which might, in some cases react upon the conscience of the entire community? It has begun to appear that, in part at least, America is losing some of its old characteristics that made the nation great. Some persons believe they see signs that the citizenship of this country is becoming more self-centered, less public-spirited, more moved by questions of private advantage than by civic consciousness. If this is so, the vast army of 4-H club members and their leaders scattered from the edge of the Pacific, where I speak, to the shores of the Atlantic -- an army almost a million strong -- have a real

opportunity to re-direct the thinking of rural America by a spirit of co-operation which would indeed, in itself, be an achievement.

My text, then, is -- and I give the text at the end of the sermon -- my text is that the goal for achievement of 4-H clubs should be to foster a spirit of real cooperation among the people of rural America.

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